



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

**Statement by Finland
Ambassador Päivi Kaukoranta
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
Ninety-Fifth Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW
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Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finland wishes to thank Ambassador Agustin Vásquez Gómez for his professionalism and commitment in chairing the Executive Council. I would also like to thank the OPCW Director General Ambassador Fernando Arias and his staff for their determination and efforts. Let me assure you of Finland's full and unwavering support and confidence to the OPCW Technical Secretariat's expertise, objectivity, impartiality, and independence.

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by Germany on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I wish to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

Mr. Chairperson,

The near universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention, with 193 States Parties, is a testimony to the international community's commitment to non-use of chemical weapons. However, over the past few years, we have witnessed a dangerous erosion of this commitment. Every time a chemical weapon is used the credibility of the CWC and the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is endangered. The use of chemical weapons also seriously undermines principles of rule-based international

system. Our urgent priority is to preserve the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to ensure that those that violate it are held accountable.

We strongly condemn the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The use of chemical weapons – by anyone and under any circumstances - is completely unacceptable and is a clear violation of international law. We call on Russia to conduct an impartial, transparent, and thorough investigation of the incident and to disclose the circumstances of this crime. Full cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is imperative.

Regarding the Syrian Arab Republic, we underline the importance of the decision of the Executive Council (EC-94/DEC.2) of 9 July this year, which was extensively consulted upon and carefully drafted in accordance with the Convention. The concrete and measurable parameters set in the decision are actions that Syria needs to take to fulfill the obligations it has freely undertaken when acceding to the Convention. Ultimately, it will be the Conference of the States Parties to consider further measures, in accordance with Art XII of the Convention. Finland has supported the establishment of the IIT and OPCW's work in Syria from the start, both politically and financially. We will continue to support the efforts of the IIT on all the remaining investigations.

Finland supports the draft decision presented by Australia, Switzerland and the United States on the use of aerosolized central nervous system acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes. Given the risks involved, we find it important to make clear that the use of these chemicals for law enforcement purposes is prohibited under the CWC. We invite State Parties to extend their support to the decision.

To conclude, I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.